

## Strangers

“For he looked for a city having a foundation, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith Sarah also received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful which had promised.”

“And therefore sprang thereof one, even of one which was dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand of the sea shore which is innumerable.”

“All these died in faith, and received not the promises, but saw them afar off, and believed them, and received them thankfully, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

“For they that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country. And if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they had leisure to have returned.”

“But now they desire a better, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” (Hebrews 11:10-16, Geneva Bible – the Bible of the Pilgrims)

## European Settlement in America

The first English immigrants to what is now the United States crossed the Atlantic long after thriving Spanish colonies had been established in Mexico, the West Indies and South America.

Like all early travelers to the New World, they came in small, overcrowded ships. During their six-to 12-week voyages, they lived on meager rations. Many died of disease; ships were often battered by storms and some were lost at sea.

Most European emigrants left their homelands to escape political oppression, to seek the freedom to practice their religion, or for adventure and opportunities denied them at home.

Economic difficulties swept England. Many people could not find work. Even skilled artisans could earn little more than a bare living. Poor crop yields added to the distress. In addition, the Industrial Revolution had created a burgeoning textile industry, which demanded an ever-increasing supply of wool to keep the looms running. Landlords enclosed farmlands and evicted the peasants in favor of sheep cultivation. Colonial expansion became an outlet for this displaced peasant population.

The idea of colonization appealed to all classes of English society. Members of the gentry were interested in the glory of having overseas colonies, hoping to spread England’s fame abroad and frustrate Spanish ambitions in the New World.

Merchants hoped to develop new industries that would provide essential goods and resources and eliminate England’s dependence upon imports from European countries. They also hoped that colonies could provide a market for English goods. Poorer members of the population hoped to improve their lot, with the possibility of jobs and the opportunity to acquire land.

## Why did the Pilgrims Leave Britain

In the 1500s England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and created a new church called the Church of England (sometimes referred to as the Anglican Church).

Although the new church had been founded by Henry VIII of England (r. 1509-1547) during the Protestant Reformation in opposition to the Catholic Church, it still retained many aspects of Catholicism which some Protestants, derisively known by Anglicans as “Puritans” because they wished to purify the Church, objected to. (Joshua Mark, 2021)



Henry VIII

King James I, the same who commissioned the famous King James Translation of the Bible, was the head of the Anglican Church, interpreted this criticism as treason, and authorized officials to fine, arrest, imprison and even execute dissenters. (Joshua Mark, 2021)

Everyone in England had to belong to the Anglican Church. There was a group of people called Separatists that wanted to separate from that church.

By age 12, William Bradford (later, the Governor of the Plymouth Colony) had read the Geneva Bible, a translation influenced by the theology of the reformer John Calvin (l. 1509-1564), who advocated strict adherence to a literal interpretation of the scriptures which encouraged worship services modeled on the simplicity of the early Christian community.

Bradford was further influenced by a religious movement known as Brownism, founded by a former Anglican priest named Robert Browne (l. 1550-1633) who claimed the Church was too corrupt to be purified and the only course for a true believer was to separate one’s self from it. Bradford found like-minded Christians in a separatist congregation in the village of Scrooby, close to his hometown of Austerfield, England.

In 1607, the Anglican Church became aware of the Scrooby congregation and arrested some, placing others under surveillance, and fining those they could. The congregation, under the leadership of John Robinson (l. 1576-1628) sold their belongings and relocated to Leiden, the Netherlands, where the government practiced a policy of religious tolerance. (Joshua Mark, 2021)

Between 1607-1618, the congregation lived freely in Leiden. Bradford and Edward Winslow both wrote glowingly of their experience. In Leiden, God had allowed them, in Bradford’s estimation, “to come as near the primitive pattern of the first churches as any other church of these later times.” God had blessed them with “much peace and liberty,” Winslow echoed.

But while they cherished the freedom of conscience they enjoyed in Leiden, the Pilgrims had two major complaints: They found it a hard place to maintain their English identity and an even harder place to make a living. In America, they hoped to live by themselves, enjoy the same degree of religious liberty and earn a “better and easier” living. (Robert Tracy McKenzie)

The English had established the colony of Jamestown in the Virginia Patent of North America in 1607, which, ten years later, was flourishing, and the Leiden congregation were already looking into some means of creating their own colony in Virginia.



Engraving by Kaspar Merian from Martin Zieler's *Topographia Germaniae Inferioris* (c. 1660), 'View of Leyden' (Leiden)

## Sailing to America

The congregation stepped up their efforts to relocate and contracted with Thomas Weston (l. 1584 - c. 1647), who was a merchant Adventurer who matched potential colonists with investors.

Bradford went to the Virginia Company and asked them for permission to establish a new colony in Virginia. It was not until 1606 that the Virginia Company of London (also called the Virginia Company and London Company) received a charter from the newly-crowned King James I.

Following the precedent set by other companies, such as the Moscovy Company and East India Company, the Virginia Company was a joint-stock company, which sold shares. All who purchased shares at a cost of £12 10s shared in the success or failure of the venture.

Supplying an overseas colony with food, materials and laborers was an expensive venture for the Virginia Company, and it depended upon the sale of stock to raise money.

Wealthy merchants, eager to find investment opportunities, established a number of companies set up to trade in various parts of the world. Investors, called "Adventurers," purchased shares of stock to help finance the costs of establishing overseas settlements. Money from the sale of stock was used to pay for ships and supplies and to recruit and outfit laborers.

The Virginia Company promised food, clothes, tools, housing and transportation to Virginia, all at Company expense.

The laborers had to work for the Company for up to seven years, and then they would be released from service, with the possibility of acquiring their own land.

The Separatists signed a contract with the Virginia Company to establish a colony. By its terms, the stockholders who financed the journey would share in the new colony's profits.

The Virginia Company agreed with Bradford about forming a colony in America and in May of 1620 the Mayflower was hired in London to take them to the mouth of the Hudson River in North America where they had been granted permission to build the colony. The Separatists called themselves "Saints."

When the recruiting for the voyage was done, several of the Leiden Saints were unable or unwilling to go. In order to fill the ship and protect their investments, the Adventurers started to recruit colonists in London, recruiting them at large without any regard to their religious beliefs. So long as a man was willing to work and strive to turn a profit for them, it was of no concern to the Adventurers how he prayed. (Willison)

The Strangers were a group of skilled workers who were sent along by the investors to help build the colony. They were considered common folk and included merchants, craftsmen and indentured servants. The Strangers had their own reasons for joining the journey, and didn't share the goal of the Saints of separating from the Church of England.

The Mayflower sailed from London to Southampton in July 1620 to begin loading food and supplies for the voyage-much of which was purchased at Southampton. The Pilgrims were mostly still living in the city of Leiden, in the Netherlands. They hired a ship called the Speedwell to take them from Delfshaven, the Netherlands, to Southampton, England, to meet up with the Mayflower. The two ships planned to sail together to Northern Virginia.

On August 5 (OS) (August 15 (NS)), the two ships finally set sail for America. But the Speedwell began leaking again, so they pulled into the town of Dartmouth for repairs, arriving about August 12 (OS) (August 22 (NS)). The Speedwell was patched up again, and the two ships again set sail for America about August 21 (OS) (August 31 (NS)).

After the two ships had sailed about 300 miles out to sea, the Speedwell again began to leak. Frustrated with the enormous amount of time lost, and their inability to fix the Speedwell so that it could be seaworthy, they returned to Plymouth, England, and made the decision to leave the Speedwell behind.

The Mayflower would go to America alone.

The cargo on the Speedwell was transferred over to the Mayflower; some of the passengers were so tired and disappointed with all the problems that they quit and went home. Others crammed themselves onto the already very crowded Mayflower. Finally, on September 6 (OS) (September 16 (NS)), the Mayflower departed from Plymouth, England, and headed for America.

The Mayflower set sail from Plymouth, England, with approximately 130 people on board: 102 passengers, the rest crew.

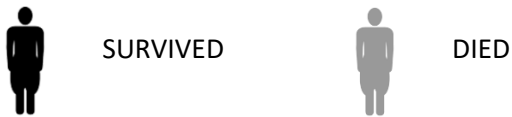
Most traveled with families; some left behind family members who were to sail on later voyages. There were 74-males (50-men) and 28-females (19-women, 3 were pregnant); the 69-adult passengers were

mainly in their 30s (the average age of the men is estimated to be 34). The 14-young adults ranged between the ages of 13 and 18, and the 19-children were 12 and under (Deetz). After arriving in harsh winter weather, one-half of the passengers died during the “general sickness” of colds, coughs and fevers.

### Mayflower List of Non-Separatists

The Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants (OKMayflower-com) put together a listing of the passengers on the Mayflower that notes those who survived and those who died during the General Sickness (using pictograms and text). One hundred two passengers departed England. One died en route and one was born, thus 102 passengers arrived in America. This summary isolates their list to the non-Separatists. This list does not include the crew and others hired by the Separatists.

The graphics depict the survivors (black image) and those who died in the General Sickness (gray image).



The listing is alphabetical of the non-Separatist households (including children, servants and others associated with the families).



#### JOHN ALDEN

John Alden was about 22 years old, single, and a cooper, or maker and repairer of wooden barrels and casks. The investors hired him in London for the voyage with the hope that he would stay with the colonists rather than return with the ship. He did stay in Plymouth, and in 1623 he married passenger Priscilla Mullins. He and Priscilla had ten children.



Alden became prominent in colony government, serving many years as assistant governor. He was instrumental in setting land grant boundaries. He also served on committees to settle disputes, was a Council of War member, and was a founder of Duxbury, Massachusetts.

In 1634, he was seized and jailed in Boston following a fatal skirmish at Plymouth’s Kennebec trading post, although he had no part in the incident. Myles Standish traveled to Boston and secured his release.

Alden was elected assistant governor up until the last year of his life. He died in 1687 in Duxbury at about age 89. Priscilla preceded him in death.

## BILLINGTON



### **JOHN & ELINOR BILLINGTON, John Jr. and Francis**

The Billington family traveled from London. John Sr. was a trailblazer, of sorts. He committed the first crime in Plymouth by scorning the military commands of Captain Standish. He committed the first murder in Plymouth by shooting a mortal enemy. And he received the first death sentence in Plymouth, dying in 1630 by hanging.

Six years after her husband's execution, Elinor was found guilty of slander and was sentenced to sit in the stocks and be whipped. Again, the punishment was the first of its kind for a woman in Plymouth. In 1638, she remarried and lived at least five more years. She died sometime between 1643-1650.

### **JOHN BILLINGTON JR.**

John Jr. was about age 16 on the voyage. While aboard the Mayflower, one of the Billington boys almost blew up the ship when he discharged his father's gun near a barrel of gun powder. Later in spring, John Jr. got lost in the woods for five days. He survived by eating berries until the formerly hostile Nausets found him. When the colonists arrived heavily armed to retrieve him, he was not only well, but wearing native beads. He died young in his 20s, probably between 1627-1630.

### **FRANCIS BILLINGTON**

Francis Billington was about age 14 on the voyage. He later worked for passenger Francis Eaton as a carpenter assistant. After Eaton died, Francis married Eaton's widow, Christian Penn Eaton. He instantly gained four children, and then he and Christian had nine children together. The family suffered great hardship and poverty throughout their lives, including having children removed from their home and losing their house to fire. Francis and Christian both died in 1684 in Middleboro. Francis was about 78 years old.

## BRITTERIDGE



### **RICHARD BRITTERIDGE**

Little is known about Richard Britteridge. He signed the Compact so was likely over age 21. He was the first to die after the ship reached Plymouth Harbor.

**BROWN**



**PETER BROWN**

Peter Brown(e) was about 25 years old, the son of William Brown of Surrey, as believed. During the first winter, Brown got lost in the woods with John Goodman when their two dogs began chasing a deer. They wandered the whole day in freezing rain, snow, and bitter cold. A search party went out but was unable to find them.

When night fell, Brown and Goodman attempted to sleep on the ground under a tree. When they began hearing roaring animal sounds, however, they quickly climbed the tree and stayed there until daybreak. As soon as it was light, they walked toward a tall hill and were able to orient themselves. They arrived at the settlement that night, faint from the cold, lack of food and sleep, and exertion.

By 1626, Peter married widow Martha Ford, who had arrived in 1621 on the *Fortune*. Martha had young children from her previous marriage, and she and Peter had two daughters together. She died by 1630, and Peter married Mary [last name unknown], with whom he had two more children. Peter died at about age 38 in the smallpox epidemic of 1633.

**CLARKE**



**RICHARD CLARKE**

Little is known about Richard Clarke. He signed the Compact so was likely over age 21. He died soon after arrival during the general sickness.

**EATON**



**FRANCIS & SARAH EATON and Samuel**

Francis and Sarah Eaton traveled from London with their infant son, Samuel. Francis was a 24-year-old carpenter. He and the baby survived the winter, but Sarah died in the general sickness.

Francis then married Dorothy, determined to be the passenger maid servant of John Carver. Dorothy died within a couple of years.

Eaton then married third wife, Christian Penn, a passenger with the *Anne* and *Little James*. This marriage produced three more children. Eaton died at about age 37 in the smallpox epidemic of 1633.

#### SAMUEL EATON

Infant son Samuel Eaton lost his mother during the general sickness. At age 13, he lost his father to smallpox. At 16, Samuel was apprenticed to John Cooke Jr. for seven years, after which he would receive “three sute of apparel,” twelve bushels of Indian corn, and a heifer. His occupation was laborer.

By age 26, Samuel had married wife Elizabeth and settled in Duxbury, where they had at least two children. In 1651, Samuel appeared in court for “mixed daunsing” with Goodwife Halle. The next year, he was sentenced to the stocks for pilfering and stealing. Elizabeth died sometime between 1656-1661.

At age 41, Samuel married his stepmother’s daughter, 23-year-old Martha Billington. Martha was the daughter of passenger Francis Billington, whom his stepmother married after Samuel’s father died.

Samuel and Martha had four children and moved from Duxbury to Middleboro. Samuel died there in 1684 at about age 64. Martha remarried and died sometime after 1704.



#### **STEPHEN & ELIZABETH HOPKINS, Constance, Giles, Damaris & Oceanus; and servants Edward Doty and Edward Leister**

This was the second voyage to America for Stephen Hopkins, a 39-year-old merchant adventurer searching to make a better life for his family.

He had previously sailed on the *Sea Venture* to Jamestown by way of Bermuda, where his ship wrecked and he was nearly executed for mutiny. After nine months in Bermuda and two years in Jamestown, he returned to England to his family.

The wife he had left behind, Mary, had died, and of his three young children, only two were living. In 1617, Stephen married Elizabeth Fisher. They had a child together, and Elizabeth was pregnant with their second. They traveled from London with Stephen’s children Constance, 14, and Giles, 12; their daughter Damaris, about 2; and servants Edward Doty and Edward Leister. While crossing the Atlantic, Elizabeth gave birth to a son whom they named Oceanus.



The Hopkins family miraculously survived the general sickness, with Elizabeth one of only four surviving women. Stephen, first noted as a tanner, was a merchant and planter in Plymouth.

He took part in the land explorations, served as assistant governor, served on the council, volunteered for the militia, and was an ambassador to the natives, providing them lodging in his home and making trips to their village.

After opening a tavern, he was occasionally fined for offenses such as allowing men to drink on the Lord's day, permitting men to drink excessively, and for charging excessive rates for beer, wine, "strong waters and nutmeggs."

In 1638/9, he was briefly jailed for firing a maidservant who had become pregnant by a convicted murderer. He was released after arranging for someone else to keep her for her remaining indenture.

Stephen died in Plymouth in 1644 at age 63. Elizabeth preceded him in death, and Stephen asked in his will to be buried as near to her as possible.

#### CONSTANCE HOPKINS

Daughter Constance Hopkins was 14 years old at the time of the voyage. By the 1727 cattle division, Constance had wed Nicholas Snow, who arrived in 1623 with the *Anne* and *Little James*.

They lived in Plymouth, then moved to Eastham, where Nicholas served as deputy, constable and selectman. They had twelve children and were married about 49 years until Nicholas died in 1676. Constance died one year later at age 71.

#### GILES HOPKINS

Son Giles Hopkins was 12 years old at the time of the voyage. At age 31, he married Catherine Wheldon, with whom he had ten children. He was a planter by occupation, and also served as surveyor of highways for Yarmouth and Eastham. Giles died in Eastham at about age 82, sometime between 1688/9-1690.

#### DAMARIS HOPKINS

Daughter Damaris Hopkins was about 2 years old at the time of the voyage. She is believed to have died in Plymouth during childhood, with another Hopkins daughter born soon after and named in her honor.

Bradford did not list the Mayflower Damaris as having children, yet Damaris Hopkins, the wife of Jacob Cook, did have a child. Also, the order in which Stephen Hopkins' children are listed in his will indicates that a Damaris was born after arrival in Plymouth.

#### OCEANUS HOPKINS

Son Oceanus Hopkins, born during the voyage, was included in the 1623 land division, but not in the 1627 cattle division. He died before age seven.

## EDWARD DOTY

Servant Edward Doty signed the Compact so was likely over age 21. During the first year in Plymouth, Doty and Edward Leister, both servants of Stephen Hopkins, committed Plymouth's second crime when they fought with sword and dagger in Plymouth's first duel. After slightly wounding each other, they were sentenced to have their head and feet tied together for a day without food or drink; however, due to their great pains and the request of Hopkins, they were released after an hour.

Doty became a freeman in 1633. Over the years that followed, he made full use of the court system, appearing numerous times as both defendant and plaintiff for complaints such as fraud, slander, breaking the peace, trespass, property damage and assault. He paid his fines as well as his taxes and, along the way, accumulated a good amount of land.

In 1635, he married his second wife, 16-year-old Faith Clark, who had arrived on the 1634 *Francis* (his first marriage is not recorded). Their marriage produced nine children and lasted for 20 years until Doty died in 1655. Faith remarried about ten years later and moved to Marshfield, where she died in 1675.

## EDWARD LEISTER

Servant Edward Leister signed the Compact so was likely over age 21. He is remembered for fighting in the first duel in Plymouth [see Doty above]. He was listed in the 1623 land division, but left Plymouth before the 1627 cattle division. Bradford later wrote that after Leister became a freeman, he moved to Virginia and died there.

## MARGESSON



### EDWARD MARGESSON

Little is known about Edward Margesson. He signed the Compact so was likely over age 21. He died soon after arrival in the general sickness.

## MARTIN



### CHRISTOPHER & MARY (PROWER) MARTIN and Solomon Prower; and servant John Langmore

Christopher and Mary (Prower) Martin traveled from London with Mary's son, Solomon Prower, and servant John Langmore. They had been married for 13 years and had one son together, who was not traveling with them. Solomon was one of five children from Mary's previous marriage.

The task of buying voyage provisions had been given to Separatists John Carver and Robert Cushman; however, to prevent “suspicion or jealousy,” they decided that the London group should have their own purchasing agent. Martin, a merchant, was appointed to the position.

He then proceeded to treat his Separatist counterparts with scorn and contempt and offend the sailors so much with his “ignorant boldness in meddling” that the sailors threatened to “mischief him.” Christopher and Mary both died in the first infection, soon after arrival.

#### SOLOMON PROWER

Solomon Prower was a servant to his stepfather. He did not sign the Compact so was likely under age 21. He died in the first infection.

#### JOHN LATHAM

Servant John Latham did not sign the Compact so was likely under age 21. He died in the first infection.



#### **WILLIAM & ALICE MULLINS, Priscilla and Joseph; and servant Robert Carter**

William and Alice Mullins traveled from London with children Priscilla and Joseph, and servant Robert Carter. Mullins was a merchant shoemaker and had brought along dozens of shoes and boots. Little else is known about the family, except that two older children remained in England. William and Alice both died during the first winter.

#### PRISCILLA MULLINS

Daughter Priscilla Mullins was the only survivor in her household. In about 1623, she married passenger John Alden, with whom she had ten children. She died sometime before John, who died in 1687.

#### JOSEPH MULLINS

Son Joseph Mullins did not sign the Compact so was likely under age 21. He died the first winter.

#### ROBERT CARTER

Servant Robert Carter did not sign the Compact so was likely under age 21. He died the first winter.

**RIGSDALE**



**JOHN & ALICE RIGSDALE**

Little is known about John and Alice Rigsdale. They traveled without children, John signed the Compact, and they both died in the first sickness.

**WARREN**



**RICHARD WARREN**

Richard Warren, a London merchant estimated to be in his late 30s, traveled alone. Three years later, his wife, Elizabeth, and five daughters, ages one to ten, arrived with the *Anne* and *Little James*. Two sons were born in Plymouth. Warren died in Plymouth in 1628. All seven of his children married and had large families, making him one of the passengers with the most descendants.

**The Mayflower Compact**

The Mayflower is “indissolubly linked with the fundamentals of American democratic institutions. She was the wave-rocked cradle of our liberties.” (Henry B. Culver, Naval Historian, 1924)

It did not start smoothly.

The Pilgrims intended to land in Northern Virginia, which at the time included the region as far north as the Hudson River in the modern State of New York.

The Hudson River, in fact, was their originally intended destination. They had received good reports on this region while in the Netherlands. All things considered, the Mayflower was almost right on target, missing the Hudson River by just a few degrees.

The voyage itself across the Atlantic Ocean took 66 days, from their departure on September 6 (OS) (September 16 (NS)), until Cape Cod was sighted on November 9 (OS)(November 19 (NS)), 1620.

As the Mayflower approached land, the crew spotted Cape Cod just as the sun rose. The Pilgrims decided to head south, to the mouth of the Hudson River in New York, where they intended to make their plantation. However, as the Mayflower headed south, it encountered some very rough seas, and nearly shipwrecked.

The Pilgrims then decided, rather than risk another attempt to go south, they would just stay and explore Cape Cod. They turned back north, rounded the tip, and anchored in what is now Provincetown Harbor. The Pilgrims would spend the next month and a half exploring Cape Cod, trying to decide where they would build their plantation. (Caleb Johnson's Mayflower History)

Back in England, the Pilgrims had signed a contract with the Virginia Company to establish a colony near the Hudson River, which at the time was part of Virginia. By its terms, the stockholders who financed the journey would share in the new colony's profits.

After bad weather during the Atlantic crossing pushed the Mayflower hundreds of miles further north, to Cape Cod, the "Strangers" didn't think they should be subject to the contract's provisions anymore.

William Bradford wrote in his history of Plymouth Plantation:

In these hard and difficult beginnings they found some discontents and murmurings arise amongst some, and mutinous speeches and carriage in other; but they were soon quelled and overcome by the wisdom, patience, and just and equal carriage of things by the Gov[ernor] and better part, which clave faithfully together in the maine.

To quell the conflict and preserve unity, Pilgrim leaders drafted the Mayflower Compact before going ashore. The brief document (about 200 words) bound its signers into a body politic for the purpose of forming a government and pledged them to abide by any laws and regulations that would later be established "for the general good of the colony." (Britannica)

The document, drafted and signed aboard the ship by nearly all of the adult male passengers, would become known as the Mayflower Compact. (Of those that did not sign, some had been hired as seamen only for one year and others may have been too ill to write. No women signed it.)

The following is the Mayflower Compact text:

"In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of England, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, e&.

"Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia;

"do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid;

"And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

"In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November (OS), in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini, 1620."

In y<sup>e</sup> name of god Amen. We whose names are underwritten  
the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord King James  
by y<sup>e</sup> grace of god, of great Britaine, France, & Ireland King,  
defendor of y<sup>e</sup> faith, &c  
Having undertaken, for y<sup>e</sup> glorie of god, and advancements  
of y<sup>e</sup> christian<sup>faith</sup>, and honour of our king & countrey, a voyage to  
plant y<sup>e</sup> first<sup>^</sup> Colonie in y<sup>e</sup> Northern parts of Virginia. Doe  
by these presents solemnly & mutually in y<sup>e</sup> presence of god, and  
one of another, Covenant, & Combine our selves together into a  
Civill body politick; for ~~our~~ better ordering, & preservation & fur-  
therance of y<sup>e</sup> ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof, to enacte,  
constitute, and frame such just & equall Lawes, ordinances,  
Acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought  
most meete & convenient for y<sup>e</sup> generall good of y<sup>e</sup> Colonie: unto  
which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness  
whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap=  
Codd y<sup>e</sup> 11. of November, in y<sup>e</sup> year of y<sup>e</sup> raigne of our sovereign  
Lord King James of England, France, & Ireland y<sup>e</sup> eighteenth  
and of Scotland y<sup>e</sup> fifth<sup>^</sup> fourth. An<sup>o</sup>. Dom. 1620.]

While they intended to form a government for their new colony, the Pilgrims and others aboard the Mayflower were not declaring their independence.

In its form and content, the Mayflower Compact echoed that of earlier covenants that Separatist Christian groups had drawn up when they established their churches in England and Holland, to bind them to each other as well as to God.

The Mayflower Compact (though the Pilgrims never called it that) began with a clear statement of loyalty to King James of England, along with a commitment to God and to Christianity.

“The Mayflower Compact was actually not so named until 1793, and was known by the citizens of Plymouth as the ‘Plymouth combination,’ or the ‘agreement between the settlers at New Plymouth.’”  
(Ernst)

The following looks at phrases within the agreement and their context:

1. In the name of God, Amen.

The Mayflower Compact opens with words that might be used to begin and end a prayer. The colony's leaders are acknowledging God as their guiding moral compass, above their loyalty to England, King James, and their everyday concerns for survival. This is no coincidence, since the leaders of Plymouth Colony had first formed a spiritual community during their time in the Netherlands. In a sense the colony - as described in the compact - was the political extension of that earlier religious congregation.

2. We, whose names are underwritten.

The 41 men who signed the Mayflower Compact included servants, soldiers, farmers, and tradesmen; only one signatory, William Brewster, had a limited university education. The high proportion of working-class settlers at Plymouth likely helped them to endure the harrowing first years. Other 17th-century English settler groups - the one at Jamestown, for instance - included many men who had little experience or skill in manual labor. They were often unprepared for the huge amount of physical work necessary to build houses, erect a fort, and clear farmland.

3. The loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord King James.

The Pilgrims had broken off from the established Church of England, but they did not view themselves as rebels against the Crown. Thus, from the very beginning, the compact emphasizes the colonists' intention to remain loyal to King James I. Their experiment in self-government is not, the compact suggests, the same thing as founding a new country. Rather, the settlers are founding a new "body politic" that is still under the rule of James.

4. For the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith.

Many - but not all - of the Plymouth settlers were motivated by a desire for religious freedom. Rejecting the hierarchy and rituals of the Church of England, these colonists came to be known as Separatists or Pilgrims. This emphasis on religious expression would be a common theme in the founding of many North American colonies: Puritans settled in Massachusetts Bay, Quakers in Pennsylvania, and so forth.

5. A voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia.

To a modern reader, it may seem odd that the colonists describe their settlement as being in Virginia. The colony of Virginia, however, once encompassed a territory much larger than the modern state.

At the time of the Mayflower landing, Virginia was simply the territory administered by the Virginia Company, a royally chartered group tasked with establishing North American settlements. With the Charter of 1609 the company's jurisdiction extended to the mouth of the Hudson - just south of the Mayflower's intended landing point.

6. Covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic.

A civil body politic is just an organized group of citizens with its own laws and government. In describing the formation of this group as a covenant, the drafters of the compact evoke the biblical covenant made between God and the Israelites in the Old Testament. The dual nature of their agreement - religious covenant and political combination - reflects the dual nature of Plymouth Colony itself.

7. For our better ordering and preservation.

Preservation is a key word here. The Plymouth colonists were well aware that if they did not band together, they would likely die. Even with an orderly governing structure in place, survival was far from guaranteed. More than half of the Plymouth settlers died before the end of the first winter in the New World, including a large majority of the women.

8. And furtherance of the ends aforesaid.

The “ends aforesaid” are the already-stated goals of the Mayflower voyage: glorify God, promote Christianity, and bring honor to England. Nothing in the latter half of the compact addresses these ends specifically - instead, the focus is on creating a framework for later, more specific laws. Many of those laws, however, would be aimed at preserving the moral and social order that the Pilgrims saw as central to Christian living. The religious character of the laws can be seen in Plymouth's 1636 legal code, which - among other things - proclaimed the death penalty for witchcraft.

9. By virtue hereof [we] do enact, constitute, and frame.

By virtue hereof means, roughly, “as a result of writing and signing this document.” Rather than attempting to derive their authority from any previous law, the Mayflower colonists established the compact as its own miniconstitution, so to speak. By signing it they essentially agree to follow whatever laws are collectively deemed necessary to keep the colony running, laws they will establish as necessary.

10. Such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and officers.

The laws established in the wake of the Mayflower Compact were designed to protect the colonists' religious expression and to promote self-rule. Nonetheless, Plymouth Colony was not a haven of absolute religious freedom. Those who refused to conform to Separatist religious practices - most notably the Quakers in later years—were denied a say in the public life of the colony. The “just and equal” character of Plymouth Colony law extended only to the Separatist majority.

11. From time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony.

Built into the Mayflower Compact is the idea of a much more detailed legal code to come afterward. The actual laws of the colony, the compact recognizes, will need to be spelled out in greater detail later. They will also need to be updated “from time to time” to deal with new circumstances, such as the growth of the colony and the arrival of new settlers. These laws were first collected in written form in 1636, with updates published throughout the colony's lifespan.

12. Unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

The stipulation of “submission and obedience” reflects the tensions between the Separatist Pilgrims and the non-Separatist Strangers. Though they numbered slightly less than half of the Mayflower colonists, the Pilgrims were a more unified and organized force than the Strangers. In effect, the Strangers were made to submit to and obey the laws sanctioned by the Pilgrims.

13. In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape-Cod the eleventh of November [OS] ... 1620.

The Mayflower Compact was signed before its crew and passengers had even disembarked from their voyage across the Atlantic. It may seem an odd choice to stop and draft a document when supplies were running short and those on board had been cooped up for months. However, when the colonists arrived in Massachusetts instead of Virginia, they were outside the reach of any



existing colonial law. They felt an agreement of some kind - even a symbolic one - was necessary to keep the diverse and discontented settlers from fighting among themselves. This shows they were far from revolutionaries but more likely concerned with self-preservation and common sense.

14. In the reign of our sovereign lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland ... and of Scotland.

Toward the end of the compact, the signers reiterate their loyalty to King James. They acknowledge him as king of England and Ireland (which he had ruled since 1603) as well as Scotland (where he had reigned since 1567).

In addition, the compact names James as king of France, a title British monarchs had formally claimed since the 15th century. James, who wished for peace throughout Europe, never attempted to assert this title by force.

15. Mr. John Carver, Mr. William Bradford, ... Edward Leister.

The names appearing at the head of this list are the de facto leaders of the colony, three of whom - Carver, Bradford, and Winslow - went on to serve terms as governor. No women signed the document, since the English customs of the time gave women no official say in political affairs. When the colony's laws were written down, only men (and even then, not all men) would be allowed to vote and hold office. (CourseHero-com)

The Mayflower Compact was regarded as law until 1686. Colonies, states, and in time the nation as a whole continued to rely on written documents both to create their own identities and to limit government powers.

The Mayflower compact is a significant historical document, signed by the Separatists and the Strangers, the craftsmen, merchants and indentured servants brought with them to establish a successful colony.

The following are the men that signed the Mayflower Compact:

John Carver	Christopher Martin	Thomas Rogers	Thomas Williams
William Brewster	William Mullins	Thomas Tinker	Degory Priest
John Howland	William White	John Rigsdale	Edmund Margesson
Edward Winslow	Stephen Hopkins	James Chilton	Peter Brown
George Soule	Thomas English	Edward Fuller	Richard Britteridge
William Bradford	Richard Warren	John Turner	Richard Clark
Isaac Allerton	John Billington	Francis Eaton	Richard Gardiner
Samuel Fuller	Edward Tilly	Edward Doty	Gilbert Winslow
John Crackstone	John Tilly	Moses Fletcher	John Alden
Myles Standish	Francis Cooke	John Goodman	John Allerton
			Edward Leister

## General Society of Mayflower Descendants

The first Society of Mayflower Descendants was established in New York City on December 22, 1894 as a society for lineal descendants of the Mayflower Pilgrims. Three more states followed in 1896: Connecticut on March 7, Massachusetts on March 28, and Pennsylvania on July 1. Delegates from the existing Societies met in Plymouth, Massachusetts, to form the General Society of Mayflower Descendants on January 12, 1897.

To be a member, you must be able to prove direct lineal descent from a passenger aboard the Mayflower who stayed on to establish the colony. The following is a list of Mayflower passengers with known descendants.

John Alden	Francis Cooke	Richard More
Bartholomew Allerton	John Cooke	Priscilla Mullins
Isaac Allerton	Edward Doty	William Mullins
Mary (Norris) Allerton	Francis Eaton	Degory Priest
Mary Allerton	Samuel Eaton	Joseph Rogers
Remember Allerton	Sarah ( ) Eaton	Thomas Rogers
Elinor Billington	Moses Fletcher	Henry Samson
Francis Billington	Edward Fuller	George Soule
John Billington	Mrs. Edward Fuller	Myles Standish
William Bradford	Samuel Fuller	Elizabeth Tilley
Love Brewster	Samuel Fuller	John Tilley
Mary ( ) Brewster	(son of Edward)	Joan (Hurst) Tilley
William Brewster	Constance Hopkins	Richard Warren
Peter Browne	Elizabeth (Fisher) Hopkins	Peregrine White
James Chilton	Giles Hopkins	Resolved White
Mrs. James Chilton	Stephen Hopkins	Susanna (Jackson) White
Mary Chilton	John Howland	William White
		Edward Winslow

Though the crew of the Mayflower certainly made significant sacrifices in completing the journey, the Mayflower Society recognizes only those passengers who stayed to form Plymouth Colony. The crew returned to England in the spring of 1621 so no members are listed above and descent from a crew member does not qualify one for membership.

Information here is primarily from The General Society of Mayflower Descendants; Bradford; World Heritage Encyclopedia; Caleb Johnson's MayflowerHistory-com; The Heritage Foundation; Julia Ernst; BBC; CourseHero-com; Henry B Culver; Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants; Joshua Mark, Geneva Bible.

In an effort to provide a brief, informal background summary of various people, places and events related to the Mayflower, I made this informal compilation from a variety of sources. This is not intended to be a technical reference document, nor an exhaustive review of the subject. Rather, it is an assemblage of information and images from various sources on basic background information. For ease in informal reading, in many cases, specific quotations and citations and attributions are often not included – however, sources are noted in the summary. The images and text are from various sources and are presented for personal, noncommercial and/or educational purposes. Thanks, Peter T. Young